

New UCSF stem cell building -- a beautiful setting for discovering new therapies

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Today the University of California, San Francisco is unveiling their brand new CIRM-funded stem cell building. It's not the largest of the 12 new buildings CIRM has funded throughout the state, but it sure is pretty with its labs perched along the Parnassus campus hillside. Like all of the new buildings, CIRM's investment in this one required a substantial investment on the part of UCSF and inspired gifts from private donors. The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation gave to the tune of \$25 million, and two gifts from Ray and Dagmar Dolby were worth a total of \$36 million.

These leveraged funds at UCSF and other facilities around the state helped create 25,000 jobs and \$200 million in tax revenue for the state - an achievement CIRM is especially proud of during these dark financial times.

Now that the building has created jobs, we're looking forward to seeing the cures and the resulting biotech investment. A story about the new Ray and Dagmar Dolby Regeneration Medicine Building in the San Francisco Chronicle quotes CIRM president Alan Trounson:

“These buildings have galvanized an area (of medical research) that had an enormous amount of potential, but scientists were being careful about entering the field. Business is really taking off in California, whereas in other parts of the country, it's a struggle.” A hallmark of the stem cell buildings CIRM has funded is that they encourage collaboration and consolidate resources. I was talking to David Shaffer at UC Berkeley while filming this video about CIRM's major facilities and he highlighted the importance of having everything in one place. Scientists in his lab must sometimes walk samples across campus to access technologies. Those hours spent readying samples for transport and walking around campus can be better spent doing the research that leads to cures.

At UCSF, scientists who might once have needed shuttles to attend colleague's seminars can now wander down the hall. Technologies are in one place, meetings are centralized and we hope ideas can flow as freely as the wide open workspaces.

To date, Davis, UC Irvine, UC Berkeley, UCLA, Stanford and USC have all opened their facilities. The remaining five are under construction and all but one is expected to open its doors this year.

- A.A.

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